

Tarrant County Master Gardeners



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Fort Worth Botanic Gardens Perennial Garden - What's Blooming? By Valerie Soens

Visit the Fort Worth Botanic Garden's Perennial Garden any day of the year to see for yourself what's blooming. Our ten beds contain hundreds of native and adaptive perennial plants which thrive in our part of North Texas. We have sun beds and shade beds consisting of dry beds and irrigated beds to simulate the various conditions which local gardeners find in their own yards. There are colorful blooms and foliage through all four seasons. People who visit on Wednesday mornings between 8:30 - 11:30 find friendly, knowledgeable Master Gardeners who generously share their love of gardening. For curious visitors on other days, our colorful mailbox contains a monthly guide which highlights the spectacular blooms for that month. Visitors may also take a brochure which highlights the garden's favorite plants and directs them to our website for more information. Each month we update the "What's Bloomin' Now" link on our TCMGA website, highlighting the plants which are bringing color to the garden that month. Ten other links will reveal plant lists for each of our ten perennial beds. This database is a wonderful resource for the general public. Hopefully, visitors leave inspired to plant perennial plants in their own yards.

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Pictured right top, a view of the garden in the summertime shade.

Pictured right center, a view of the garden in the summertime sun.

Pictured right bottom, a view of the garden in the spring.

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Fort Worth Botanic Gardens Perennial Garden cont.

We are searching for details relating to history of the Perennial Garden. We know the acreage we now tend as the Perennial Garden was part of the historic Fort Worth Botanic Garden. In 1935 the CWA labor placed large, fossiliferous limestone boulders along the slope and creek north of the Rose Garden, giving the area definition. Trees and wildflowers were planted along the stream and flagstone path from the Shelter House and Oval Rose Garden. A Cactus Garden with specimens from Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona was established in the rocky outcrops. As the trees filled out, the cactus and succulents were moved to sunnier locations and perennials were planted in their place. In 1998, the heron sculpture was commissioned for the waterfall pond. By the turn of the century, Tarrant County Master Gardeners were caring for the Perennial Garden. We would like to know more details about the butterfly bench and how TCMGA became involved at the Perennial Garden. Perhaps you can provide the missing details!

The Perennial Garden has a small group of volunteers working on a regular basis. Along with weekly weeding, pruning, and mulching, we are in the process of deciding which spectacular perennial specimens we can add to our area. Several beds would benefit from having their own gardener care for them. We welcome help with several tasks; some down and dirty ones, and a few clean and easy ones. So when you have a free Wednesday morning, please come visit us and see for yourself *what's bloom' now*.



Above, the garden in winter.



Above, the garden in autumn.

From the President's Corner

Well, here it is October and Fall is just around the corner. I love the cooler weather, wish it would continue, but feel very blessed to have the rain. The colors in my garden have come to life and my oxalis is bursting with pink blooms once again. I need to work in my garden, a little me time to renew my energy. Being in the garden is the most relaxing therapy for me.

I want to thank each of you who attended the September Royal Garden Picnic (the September Monthly Meeting). We had great attendance and the annual hat contest was a hit. I enjoyed seeing the creativity and/or purchased hats. Henry Cole won the men's category with his Chef's hat and his puppet Emma, Melanie Stephens won the women's category with a beautiful hat with real flower's and Sandy Dylan won Best of Show with her original design. Special thanks to Rocky Deutscher for planning and coordinating the picnic and tour of the Demonstration Garden. Also a big thanks to all who planned, helped setup and take down, TCMGA Tour and bulb promotions, cleaning of the garden and being available in the garden to answer questions. Rocky has decided to do a Picnic in May 2019 and it will be Derby Day. Hats you might see at the Kentucky Derby.

Now is the time to start collecting leaves for the compost pile and prepare your flower beds for bulb planting. The mums, pansies, snapdragons and many more fall planting are arriving at the area nursery's.

October is also the month we vote on our 2019 slate of officers for TCMGA. Theresa Thomas, President, Rocky Deutscher, 1st Vice President, Debra Rosenthal, 3rd Vice President, Debby Stevenson, Treasurer and Debbie Rasmussen, Secretary.

Last a reminder your need to complete your hours to re-certify. Your Timekeepers have given me a list of their members who are lacking in hours to re-certify. Please take time to enter your hours. We want to see your smiling face in the garden.

Happy gardening and Big hugs to all,

Judy



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Fall Planting is Still the Best Planting

By Author Judy Barrett, from Judy Barrett Homegrown website
Sharecropper-October 2013

About the Author - Judy Barrett is the founding editor and publisher of HOMEGROWN: Good Sense Organic Gardening (now available via email). She was previously the editor of The New Garden Journal and one of the hosts of the public television series, The New Garden. A long-time organic gardener, Judy writes for various regional and national gardening publications.

She is also the author of several gardening books including Tomatillos: A Gardener's Dream A Cook's Delight and How To Become An Organic Gardener in 7 Easy Steps. She is an occasional columnist on gardening for Edible Austin, Acres U.S.A., Harris Old Farmer's Almanac and other publications.

You hear it every year. But do you take it to heart? Yet, it is true. Fall is the very best time to plant almost everything in your garden. This is true everywhere, but especially true in Texas.

Why? Because spring in Texas comes and goes very quickly. One day it is a beautiful cool spring day and the next day it is hot as blazes. It is uncomfortable enough for people, but imagine those poor little plants. In the best of all climates, the weather would warm gradually, letting the plants adapt at a reasonable rate, but in Texas, they are trying to send down roots, put on leaves, flower, make seeds and grow taller all at the same time — and all while the weather is putting additional stress on them.

If you plant in the fall, on the other hand, the weather is getting gradually cooler rather than suddenly hotter. There is less stress. Plants often get rainwater from fall showers. The soil is a manageable temperature and the plants don't have to do a lot of growing, flowering and leafing out right away. They can concentrate their effort during the winter months on establishing a healthy and strong root system. Then, when spring comes, they have the necessary underground support to get busy making leaves, flowers, fruit and seeds.

What? All perennial plants will do best if planted in the fall. That includes shrubs, ornamental and shade trees, roses, herbs, perennial flowers, fruit and nut trees and bushes, grass, artichoke, garlic, spring-flowering bulbs and perennial vines. Early spring and winter blooming annuals also need to be planted in the fall, including Sweet peas, Onion seed, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Lettuces, Spinach, Calendula, Pansy and others.

Small plants should probably go into the ground in October. Garlic, perennial herbs, roses, and other shrubs will profit from being planted in October before the really cold weather sets in and when there is a good chance of rain. Trees should be planted when they are dormant, in the middle of winter. The rule of thumb is that if your plant is growing in a container, it can be planted almost any time during the growing season, and the fall is the best. If you are planting a bare root plant, wait until the weather is cold and the leaves have all fallen from the trees.

Cool weather veggies can go into the ground beginning in September depending on where you live. Plant seeds or seedlings according to the Extension Service's chart of planting dates for your area. You can find it at your local Extension office or online. Texas A&M has websites for various areas and counties in the state. Search for yours for a specific list. The further south you are, the later your planting dates will be. In Central Texas, for ex-

Fall Planting is Still the Best Planting cont.

ample, carrots don't go into the ground until November.

What else? If you haven't amended your soil since spring, it is definitely time. All that spring and summer growing has probably used up all the nutrients that were in your soil. Not only does growing use up nutrients, but all the rain we had this year will have washed away many minerals and much organic material.

Fall is always a good time to add organic material to the soil because it has a few months of cool weather in which to break down and become incorporated into the soil. A good deep layer of mulch applied to the garden in late summer or early fall will serve several purposes. It will protect the topsoil from runoff in case of rain or wind in case it is dry. It will moderate the temperature of the soil and keep it from getting too cold or too hot. As the mulch lays on top of the soil, it creates an ideal environment for earthworms and other soil critters that make our gardens more fertile. The mulch also discourages the growth of weeds around your plants. Weeds, as you know, will gobble up the available nutrients and sunshine, depriving your favorite plants of the elements they need. The mulch won't let weed seeds get down to the soil where they can sprout and it makes other weeds struggle to get enough sunlight to thrive. The weeds that do make it through the mulch layer are easy to pull out. The layer of mulch next to the soil is also slowly breaking down and becoming plant food as it turns to compost. Just by adding mulch to your garden in the fall, you will have improved your soil dramatically by springtime.

In addition to being an excellent time to add mulch to the garden, fall is a good time to work manure, compost, mineral powders and other organic supplements into the soil. All of these goodies will combine over the winter to provide a perfect planting medium for your spring plants.

When you add plants to your garden in the fall, give them a healthy dose of compost to get them off to a good start, put a good layer of mulch around them and give them several good soakings with a blend of seaweed, fish emulsion, and molasses or a product that combines those ingredients. Those products will help your new plants get off to a good start and protect them from many diseases that can attack young, weak plants. Fish emulsion is a gentle fertilizer that contains nitrogen and other essential nutrients. It is made from whole fish or fish products and is especially good at keeping your plants from suffering from stress as a result of transplanting or extremes in the weather. Fish emulsion provides a slow-release of significant amounts of nitrogen and lesser amounts of potash, phosphorus, calcium and other minerals. All are necessary to healthy plant growth. Seaweed contains essential trace elements and growth stimulants which keep your plants happy and healthy as they develop strong roots and stems. Molasses feeds the micro-organisms in the soil that are necessary to your plant's ability to absorb any nutrients that you give them. These three essential ingredients will make a gentle, natural fertilizer that keeps your plants healthy year-round. You can use these products on any plant at any time. You don't have to worry about burning or polluting or any other bad effect that comes with chemical fertilizers. They are also credited with discouraging insect pests. Seaweed is especially good at preventing spider mites when sprayed on susceptible plants regularly.

You can even use this dandy mix indoors on your houseplants or on the plants you bring in to protect in the winter. Aside from a temporary scent of the ocean (I tell my husband to pretend he's on vacation), this blend is great for using on every plant you own, indoors or out. Use it more frequently during the growth periods of the year — spring and fall — and cut back to occasional use in high summer and winter.

Then what? If you plant in the fall as recommended and build your soil, you will find that your spring gardening

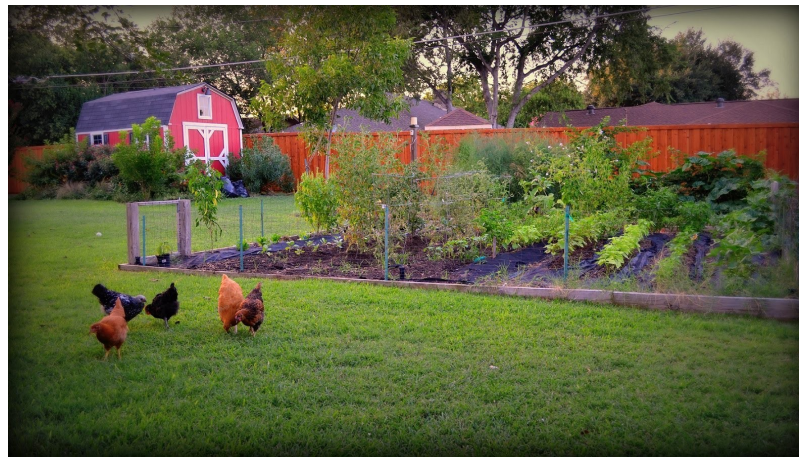
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tasks will be much easier to accomplish. Your plants will be happy, healthy and ready to start putting out all those leaves, flowers and fruit you were hoping for when you planted them. You will have fewer weeds, fewer bugs and generally a more self-sustaining garden because of your autumn efforts.



Content provided by Theresa Thomas



Tarrant County Master Gardener Garden Tour Arlington, Texas October 7, 2018. 11:00am to 4:00pm

Whatever your garden size or conditions, you will find ideas on how to make your own garden better by touring the six Arlington gardens that will be open for you on Sunday, October 7. Each garden is the result of a homeowner making the best of the conditions they found on their property. The gardens represent the love and hard work of the homeowners who have designed and created these gardens themselves. Tarrant County Master Gardeners will be on hand at each garden to answer questions, and there will be educational activities at selected gardens, including learning about backyard chickens! For more information on the gardens visit our website www.tarrantmg.org. Tickets will be available on our website beginning August 15, or at each garden on the day of the tour.

False Dragonhead

False Dragonhead, *Physostegia digitalis*

Lamiaceae (Mint Family)

by Josephine Keeney, Cross Timbers Master Naturalist and Plant Sale Co-Chairperson of the North Central Chapter of the Texas Native Plant Society of Texas

This lovely strong plant is one of the Obedient plant group. The leaves which are oval shaped distinguish it from other Obedient plants which have leaves that are long and pointed.

The pink flowers are large and the flower spikes are very large with many side blooming shoots that sometimes bloom at the leaf nodes, all along the stem.

The flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds and even little lizards perhaps looking for a meal.

It can reach 3-6 feet in height and presents a very impressive display during the hot days of summer, when other plants are taking a break.

This perennial grows best in part shade and likes plenty of water during hot spells since its natural habitat is moist areas or close to water.

Content provided by Theresa
Thomas

